Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin

Co-funded by the European Union

AGRICOOP

Cooperation through Tech-Based Practices to Struggle Invasive Species and Climate Change for a Sustainable and Resilient Agriculture

BSB01005 AGRICOOP

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

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Publication Date: [January, 2026]

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope

This Communication and Dissemination Strategy has been prepared to ensure the systematic and integrated planning of all communication, visibility, and dissemination activities to be carried out within the scope of the AGRICOOP Project. The strategy aims to ensure effective coordination among project partners, facilitate the monitoring of project activities, enable the delivery of project outputs to the relevant target groups, and enhance the visibility of the results achieved at local, national, and international levels.

This document will serve as a common reference framework for the project partners, namely Trabzon Commodity Exchange (TCE), Varna Economic Development Agency (VEDA), LEPL Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University (BSU), and Ondokuz Mayıs University (OMU). The strategy will guide the planning of communication activities to be implemented throughout the project duration and will contribute to the sustainability of the project results.

2. COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

2.1 Who?

Communication and dissemination activities to be carried out within the framework of the AGRICOOP Project are primarily addressed to target groups operating in the agricultural sector within the Black Sea Basin and those directly or indirectly affected by the impacts of invasive alien species and climate change. The project's target groups are grouped under five main headings:

General Public: Farmers are one of the main target groups of the AGRICOOP Project. Within the scope of the project, the aim is to raise farmers' awareness of invasive species and the effects of climate change on agriculture through technology-based applications and to encourage them to use the MAPPEST application.

At least 100 farmers from each partner country will be trained at pest and climate detection stations to be established in pilot regions, thereby strengthening farmers' capacity to combat invasive species and climate change. Farmers should be registered in the official farmer registration system of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

***Higher Education and Research Organisations*:** The academicians in departments of agriculture and/or related departments, the research organisations, which are studying agricultural products are in target groups of AGRICOOP Project. At least 5 universities and 5 research organisations from each partner country will be informed about the research and developed struggle methodologies against invasive species.

***Interest Groups Including NGOs*:** Project partners as Trabzon Commodity Exchange, Varna Economic Development Agency, Chambers, associations and foundations focused on Agriculture in partner countries are among target groups of AGRICOOP Project. The staff of these organizations will be trained in order to use pest /climate determination stations in pilot orchards, and they will also learn how to disseminate the data, taken from the stations to the farmers, who are registered to farmers' register system of provincial directorate of Agriculture and Forestry.

Apart from chamber of agriculture, producer/farmer associations in partner countries are also among the target group of AGRICOOP project. Since the associations are high in number, it will be easy to reach each farmer. It is foreseen to reach at least 10 organisations from each country (30 in total) will be ensured.

Local Public Authority: Local public authorities including provincial directorates of Agriculture and forestry in partner countries will be involved in activities of the project. This group will support most of the activities carried out within the scope of the project and will contribute to reaching a wider group of farmers and supporting organisations, particularly through dissemination activities. In this direction, it is planned to meet with a total of at least 5 local authorities from each country.

Other: Awareness will be raised among project stakeholders on how to take measures against invasive species. Institutions and organizations planning to participate in project activities include civil society organizations, chambers of agriculture, public institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture, and local governments. Project outputs will primarily benefit farmers. Furthermore, cooperation between institutions in the three partner countries will contribute to the sustainable development of agriculture in the Black Sea region, and long-term cooperation networks are expected to be established among project partners.

2.2 What?

According to the Global Invasive Species Programme, climate change and invasive alien species (IAS) are among the two greatest threats to biodiversity and the sustainability of ecosystem services. The rapid spread of IAS worldwide creates significant economic and environmental pressures, particularly on the agricultural sector. It is estimated that the annual global damage caused by invasive species exceeds USD 1.4 trillion, corresponding to approximately 5% of the global economy. These impacts affect not only agriculture but also several other sectors, including forestry, aquaculture, trade, transportation, and energy production. The lack of sufficient awareness and technology-based tools among individuals and institutions involved in agricultural activities to combat IAS prevents the development of effective control mechanisms and leads to a decline in agricultural productivity.

In this context, the overall objective of the AGRICOOP Project is to promote sustainable and resilient agriculture, improve the quality and productivity of agricultural products by identifying IAS and developing control methods, developing common solutions and pilot actions for different types of environmental hazards in affected and exposed areas in BSB, facilitating information exchange among stakeholders, integrating advanced technology systems for use by target groups, and thereby raising awareness and ensuring adaptation to climate change.

3. COMMUNICATION PLAN

Within the framework of the communication strategies to be implemented throughout the AGRICOOP Project, project promotion activities will be carried out and appropriate communication channels and tools will be established. All communication channels, project outputs, and promotional materials used at both project and programme levels will include the European Union emblem and the Interreg VI-B NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme logo, in compliance with the rules specified in the relevant visibility guidelines.

The implementation and impact of communication and dissemination activities will continue throughout the project duration and will also be sustained after the completion of the project. Taking into account the Horizontal Principles of the Programme, communication activities will be conducted primarily through digital platforms whenever possible, minimizing the use of printed materials and prioritizing electronic publications. This approach is consistent with the objective of contributing to environmental sustainability.

Considering the different needs of target groups and the various phases of the project lifecycle, the following general communication objectives have been adopted:

- To support the successful implementation of the project by ensuring an effective communication system.
- To increase the awareness of potential target groups regarding the opportunities and outputs offered by the project and to facilitate the development of strong transnational partnerships and networks.
- To support knowledge transfer, cooperation, and the sharing of best practices among target groups, thereby maximizing the project's impact.
- To increase the visibility of project activities, results, and the Black Sea Basin (BSB) Programme, and to enhance public awareness.
- To facilitate knowledge exchange among project partners, disseminate best practices in the management of invasive alien species (IAS), and promote a better understanding of climate change adaptation.
- To contribute to and promote sustainable and resilient agriculture at local, national, and EU levels within the BSB countries.

3.1 ONLINE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

3.1.1 Project Web Site

The project website will be developed to serve as the main source of information for all target groups. In order to disseminate the project's content and information, the website address has been designated as www.agricoopproject.net. The project website will be used as a strategic communication tool to ensure sustainable interaction with target audiences as well as with other relevant institutions and organizations.

The website will include dedicated sections presenting the objectives, scope, and target groups of the project, as well as information about the project team, relevant links, and contact details.

Trabzon Commodity Exchange (TCE) will mobilize its own resources to maintain the project website, which will serve as the primary information platform for all target groups, for at least three years. All documents, outputs, and relevant content related to the project implementation will be publicly available on the website. The website will also be linked through the institutional websites of the project partners and will be optimized in accordance with the latest security, compliance, and accessibility standards.

Through the project website and social media accounts, regular messages and announcements will be shared to raise awareness among the general public and target groups regarding the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement, the "Do No Significant Harm" (DNSH) principle, and green practices.

Furthermore, to ensure accessibility for disadvantaged groups, including individuals with disabilities or health conditions, all activities and project outputs will be made available in digital formats through the project website and the MAPPEST pest detection application.

TCE will also allocate its own resources to maintain the project website and social media accounts for at least three years after the completion of the project.

As an essential tool for sustainability, project partners will actively promote the project website, which will include all key outputs and results obtained from activities carried out in the pilot regions. All outputs developed within the project will remain accessible on the website (even after the project completion), will be freely available in downloadable formats, and will serve as a platform for maintaining communication between organizations involved in the project and those interested in benefiting from its results.

Icons and links to the project's Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), LinkedIn, and YouTube social media accounts will also be available on the project website.

3.1.2 Social Media

The content and information of the AGRICOOP Project will also be disseminated through social media accounts. Announcements related to the events, training sessions, and seminars organized within the scope of the project, as well as updates on project activities and the results achieved, will be regularly shared through social media platforms in order to reach a wider audience. Social media platforms will be actively used to disseminate project activities, events, and results to wider audiences.

Social media content will include informative visuals related to invasive alien species, fieldwork activities, farmers' experiences, and technical explanations. In this way, a communication approach that addresses both technical audiences and the general public will be adopted.

For this purpose, the social media platforms most commonly used by the target groups have been identified as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), LinkedIn, and YouTube.

In order to promote the project, inform the public, and make the control methods against invasive alien species (IAS) more accessible and widespread among farmers, three short awareness-raising videos will be produced.

In addition, at least three social media announcements will be published through the project's social media channels in each partner country, supported by paid promotional campaigns for a minimum period of six months.

3.1.3 Internal Communication Tools

Microsoft Teams has been selected as the project management and communication tool to facilitate effective interaction among project partners, enabling them to achieve the project objectives, maintain a successful partnership, and deliver high-quality results.

All necessary templates and documents will be made available through this communication platform. In addition, any team member from any project

partner will be able to initiate an instant online meeting by inviting other team members through the system. Records of all meetings will be stored within this platform.

Within the framework of the project, partners will organize four consortium meetings. In addition, at least nine online conference meetings will be held through the designated project management tool in order to monitor the progress of planned activities, communicate issues related to project implementation, and address any questions that may arise.

3.1.4 JEMS Platform

The Project Coordinator will use the web-based JEMS (Joint Electronic Monitoring System) to record all information related to the activities carried out within the scope of the project. Through this system, the Project Coordinator will prepare and submit the progress reports, interim reports, and final report related to the project implementation.

3.2 Offline Communication Activities

In order to implement offline communication activities, printed materials will be prepared and shared with target groups, as well as with relevant institutions and organizations.

3.2.1 Preparation of Brochures

The project brochure is considered one of the most effective promotional tools. Both digital and printed versions of the project brochures will be prepared. A total of 1,500 brochures will be printed, and the printed versions will be distributed to relevant institutions, organizations, and target groups during project activities organized in each partner country.

At least 500 brochures will be distributed to the target groups in each country, while the digital versions will be uploaded to the project website.

In order to promote the project effectively, the brochures will include visually attractive designs and graphics. Furthermore, the online versions of the brochures will be uploaded to the project website and made available for download.

The brochure texts will be prepared in English and translated into the national languages of each partner country in cooperation with the respective project partners.

3.2.2 Preparation of Roll-up Banners and Booklets

Promotional materials such as brochures, roll-up banners, and booklets, which will be used during the project's training sessions, seminars, international forum, and similar events, will be prepared in accordance with the project visual identity guidelines. These materials will be designed to attract the attention of both the general public and the target groups and will be produced accordingly.

Brochures, roll-up banners, and booklets are among the most effective visibility tools for communicating the results achieved within the project and ensuring the overall visibility of the project.

3.3 AGRICOOP Visual Identity Guidelines

The graphic identity of the AGRICOOP Project has been developed in accordance with the "Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme Visual Identity Guidelines."

The legal requirements regarding transparency and communication are defined under Article 36 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059. According to these provisions:

- Programme names/logos should never appear above the Programme logo.
- The standard logo is the full color version and will be used wherever possible.
- Projects are free to develop their own logos.
- The project name cannot exceed a width equivalent to the width of the Interreg logotype and the EU emblem combined, and a height equivalent to the height of the EU emblem.
- The minimum visibility element that must be included in all communication materials is the Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme Standard logo.
- Apart from the Programme logo, no other visual identity or logo should be used to highlight EU support.
- The standard logo is the full colour version in the colour codes specified in the visibility guide.
- In cases where the standard logo cannot be used, alternative logos specified in the visibility rules guide may be used.
- Monochrome versions may only be used in justified cases.
- If the products/equipment are small, they must at least include the EU emblem.

Within the framework of the AGRICOOP Corporate Identity, the following materials have been produced:

- Logo Design
- Social Media Background Design
- Letterhead Design
- Timesheet Template
- Name Badge Design
- Meeting Minutes Template
- Presentation Visual Design (PowerPoint template and Word template)

- Invitation Design
- Folder Spine Design
- Training/Meeting/Event Participation Form Design
- Training/Event Evaluation Form Design
- Brochure/Rollup/Poster Background Design
- Block Note Design

The main color codes to be used in the project activities have been defined as follows:



The color codes specified during the creation of the AGRICOOP logo have been used.

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The final decision regarding the logo was made through a survey conducted among the project partners.

The AGRICOOP visual identity will be used across the project website, social media platforms, trainings, seminars, forums, and similar events, as well as in all documentation and communication materials produced within the scope of the project.

4. DISSEMINATION PLAN

Dissemination activities are defined as the process of systematically delivering information about the activities planned within the AGRICOOP Project, the results obtained, and the outputs developed to the relevant target audiences.

In this context, it is aimed to ensure the visibility of the main outputs of the project—namely the MAPPEST mobile application, CPDS stations, training modules, and the outcomes of the International Forum—among stakeholders, end users, relevant target groups, and decision-makers.

Dissemination activities aim to ensure that project results reach different target groups, expand the impact of project outputs, support the sustainability of project results beyond the project lifetime, and strengthen the institutional capacity of the partner organizations. At the same time, these activities are expected to serve as a source of inspiration for other institutions and organizations and to pave the way for future cross-border cooperation projects.

All dissemination and communication activities will be designed to increase the visibility of the project at local, regional, national, and European levels.

Project partners will contribute to this process in line with their respective areas of expertise and experience. Throughout the project duration, the development and implementation of additional or new dissemination tools will also be considered.
Dissemination activities will continue throughout the project implementation period and are planned to be sustained after the completion of the project in accordance with the principle of sustainability.

4.1 Dissemination Activities During the Project Implementation

All dissemination activities will aim to maximize the visibility of the project not only within the three participating countries but also at broader regional, national, and European levels.

Trabzon Commodity Exchange (TCE) will develop the project's visual identity in accordance with the programme's visibility rules, and all promotional materials will follow the relevant programme guidelines. All Project Partners (PPs) will contribute to ensuring the visibility, sustainability, multiplier effect, and transferability of the project in line with their expertise, resources, and networks.

In order to share and promote the project results, the following tools will be used to ensure free access to key outputs, such as best practices, reports, training modules, and the pest detection application:

-Websites and social media accounts of the project, project partners (PPs), and associated partners.

-Mobility of project teams, consortium meetings, and conference meetings
-Promotional materials (brochures, handbooks, roll-up banners, etc.)
-Written, visual, and audio media announcements through media channels in each PP country (radio programmes, local newspapers, publications, etc.)
-Local networks of the project partners.

Beyond partnership activities, the project will also be promoted through:

- The Black Sea Basin (BSB) Programme's official website, platforms, and other relevant online tools
- International and national events such as conferences and exhibitions
- Large international networks such as Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN), and European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST).

Since the partnership includes members of these networks, the project results will have the potential to be disseminated in more than 60 countries.

All resources developed within the project will be published on the project website. These resources will be made available in digital formats that are freely accessible, reusable, modifiable, and downloadable, without any restrictions or fees.

Furthermore, throughout all dissemination activities and events involving target groups, particular attention will be given to gender equality considerations, ensuring the avoidance of sexist language and stereotypical or discriminatory imagery.

4.1.1 Events Organized within the AGRICOOP Project

The events to be organized within the framework of the AGRICOOP Project represent one of the most important dissemination tools for directly delivering the project's key outputs and results to the target groups. Through these events, project activities will be made visible, stakeholder engagement will be strengthened, and cross-border knowledge exchange will be encouraged.

The events to be implemented during the project period will include stakeholder meetings, farmer training sessions, technical information seminars, field demonstrations, and the organization of an International Forum. These activities aim to raise awareness regarding the early detection, monitoring, and sustainable management of invasive alien species (IAS).

Throughout the project implementation, information visits will be conducted for relevant stakeholders in each partner country. Within this scope, direct engagement with at least 30 stakeholders across the three participating countries is planned, including farmer cooperatives, directorates of agriculture and forestry, research institutes, universities, and other relevant actors.

During the project period, theoretical and practical training programmes and information seminars for farmers will be organized in each partner country. Through four training modules, the project aims to train 300 farmers and involve at least 450 participants in seminar activities.

Training activities will address topics such as invasive alien species (IAS) identified in the partner countries and the control methods developed to address them, the use of the MAPPEST mobile application, and the interpretation of station data for agricultural products. The content of the trainings will also be enriched within the framework of climate-resilient agricultural policies.

In addition, mechanical and biotechnical control methods will be demonstrated through field applications in the pilot regions. Technical training sessions will also be provided to beneficiaries on the functioning of the Climate & Pest Detection Stations (CPDS) system, as well as on data reading and evaluation processes.

The International Forum will serve as the main platform for sharing project results at regional and international levels. Within the forum, project outputs, examples of best practices, and joint management strategies will be presented to stakeholders, academic communities, and decision-makers. This event aims to contribute to the establishment of cooperation networks across the Black Sea Basin.

All events will be organized in accordance with the visibility rules of the Interreg VI-B NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme and will be announced through the relevant communication channels.

4.2 Dissemination Activities at the End of and After the Project

The project has been developed through an integrated approach supported by digital tools in order to create sustained impact and long-term results for target groups, including farmers, researchers, farmer cooperatives, chambers and directorates of agriculture and forestry, agencies, research institutes, unions, and other stakeholders involved in the agricultural sector.

The long-term impact of the project will be ensured through the continued use of the tools and materials developed within the project, which will remain freely accessible after the project completion. In particular, the MAPPEST application and the project website—containing all project outputs—will play a central role in ensuring the sustainability of the project results by enabling continued access for partners within the ecosystem and other relevant institutions.

All project outputs will be made freely accessible to all interested stakeholders without any restrictions. Action plans, the Pest Detection Application, and capacity- and awareness-building materials—including training modules, handbooks, brochures, videos, and social media content focusing on control methods—will be shared with local, regional, and national authorities.

This approach is aligned with the obligation of national authorities to contribute to the Integrated Black Sea Management Plan.In particular, the control methods developed and tested in the pilot areas of the project partners may also be applied in other regions across the Black Sea Basin.

Depending on the needs identified among the target groups, similar activities, training sessions, and exchanges of best practices may be implemented, and the project outputs and results may be adapted and further developed for use in other countries, basins, and regions.

Within the framework of the project, 300 farmers in the selected pilot regions will be trained and 450 farmers will participate in seminars. However, the training modules developed under the project will remain available after the completion of the project and may be used by all project partners for the benefit of their target groups, as well as by other institutions and individuals across the Black Sea Basin region.

Furthermore, in order to disseminate the project results to a wider audience, the project partners will organize meetings with at least 30 stakeholders within their regional ecosystems, including farmer cooperatives, chambers and directorates of agriculture and forestry, agencies, research institutes, unions, and public institutions.

In addition, it is expected that at least 300 participants from the ecosystem target groups will attend the Forum event to be organized in Türkiye, where they will have the opportunity to learn about the project results and benefit from the best practices collected throughout the project.

Beyond the short-term impacts expected for the project's target groups, project partners, and stakeholders at regional and national levels within the three participating countries, the project is also expected to create broader and long-lasting impacts at EU and international levels in the medium and long term.

These expected impacts include:

-Serving as a source of inspiration and motivation for target groups, contributing to a better understanding and development of sustainable agriculture.

-Improving the awareness and perception of farmers and relevant institutions regarding invasive alien species (IAS), climate change, and adaptation measures, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the practices and precautions they adopt.

-Strengthening cooperation among relevant actors, particularly across different countries.

-Sharing best practices related to sustainable agricultural processes through the various tools developed within the project.

-Increasing the productivity and economic return of agricultural products.

-Enhancing the capacity and competitiveness of target groups and project partners at local, national, and EU levels.

-Increasing opportunities for future national and international networks, research collaborations, and partnerships among ecosystem actors.

-Supporting the acquisition of useful professional skills by the target groups.

-Increasing the number of organizations adopting the training modules developed within the project.

-Promoting the use of new technologies and digital tools in agriculture.

-Raising awareness of EU opportunities aimed at strengthening the agricultural ecosystem.

-Encouraging continuous learning and the development of new knowledge, skills, and competencies.

-Ensuring the international visibility of the Black Sea Basin (BSB) Programme and the project outputs.

4.3 Quantitative Indicators to Assess the Effectiveness of Dissemination Activities (Total for the 3 Partner Countries)

-4 Consortium meetings

-9 Conference calls

-50 Publications in social and other media

-2000 Visits on the website

-30 Meetings with stakeholders

-45 Field visits to identify invasive species

-3 National reports of invasive species

-3 National catalogues created for agricultural products affected by climate change and invasive species

-1 Joint Analysis Report of actions taken against identified IAS

-6 Good practices identified

-3 Struggling methods developed by the consortium (3)

-20 Locations where mechanical and biotechnical fight is applied

-3 Pilot regions identified

-15 Climate/IAS detection stations

-1 Mobile application developed for IAS detection

-4 Training modules, 3 awareness raising videos, 1500 brochures

-Trainings in pilot regions, 300 participants

-6 Seminars organized, 450 participants

-International forum, 300 participants

Qualitative Indicators (in total for each 3 countries):

-Min.90% satisfaction rate for partners on implementation and management of all activities,

-Min.90% satisfaction rate for target groups on project outputs

-Min.90% satisfaction rate of participants in activities